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Official Rhode Island Soil Survey Information

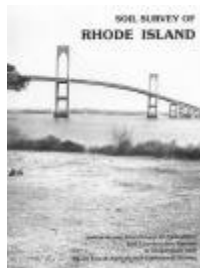
It is Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy to maintain the official copy of the soil survey in field offices to record changes, omissions, or possible errors. The policy is contained in Title 430 of the General Manual. Section II of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) contains the official soils information used in NRCS Field Offices in Rhode Island. It is Rhode Island NRCS policy that the soils information referred to in Section II is not stored as hardcopy, but rather made available for download in the Microsoft ACCESS database. The Soil Data Mart (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>) is the official source for soil survey maps and tabular soil data, unless otherwise specifically stated within the subsections of the FOTG. Persons who do not have the Microsoft ACCESS program or to access to the Soil Data Mart may contact the RI NRCS office (<http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soils.html>). The published Soil Survey of Rhode Island (Rector, 1981) includes many of the same interpretations as contained in the spatial and tabular database, however the published survey is considered to be an archived publication and not the official USDA-NRCS soil data. There will be some updating of the interpretations contained on the Soil Data Mart and Microsoft ACCESS database. There may be some special interpretations in the published report not available in the database. The spatial soil data (digital soil polygons, points, and lines) downloaded from the Soil Data Mart is the most current soil mapping for Rhode Island, please read the Metadata contained in the download file for information about changes made to the digital soil map.

Use and Explanation of Soil Interpretations

Soil survey interpretations are predictions of soil behavior for specified land uses and specified management practices. They are based on the soil properties that directly influence the specified use of the soil. Soil survey interpretations allow users of soil surveys to plan reasonable alternatives for the use and management of soils. They are used to plan both broad categories of land use such as cropland, pastureland, woodland, or urban development, as well as specific elements of those land uses (for example, irrigation of cropland, equipment use in woodland management, or septic tank absorption fields). When soil interpretations are used in connection with delineated areas on soil maps, the information pertains to the soil for which the soil area is named. Other soils that are in areas too small to map may occur within the delineated area. Ordinarily, the interpretations do not apply to the included soils. More detailed studies are required if small, specific sites are to be developed or used within a given soil delineation. For example, a soil delineation bearing the name Agawam fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, may also include small areas of other soils, such as Hinckley and Walpole. The interpretations apply to the Agawam part of the delineated soil area and not to the included soils. Soil interpretations will not eliminate the need for onsite study and testing of specific sites for the design and construction for specific uses. In fact, some soil interpretations use national criteria and have not been customized to incorporate Rhode Island requirements. The interpretations can be used as a guide to planning more detailed investigations and for avoiding undesirable sites for an intended use. The soil map and interpretations can be used to select sites that have the least limitations for an intended use. No consideration was given in these interpretations to the size and shape of soil delineations or to the pattern formed with other soils on the landscape. For example, some very desirable soil areas are too small, too irregular in shape, or occur with less desirable soils in a pattern too complex for the intended use. Although not considered in the interpretations, these items may influence the final selection of a site.

Map Unit Descriptions

Non-technical soil map unit descriptions included in section II of the FOTG provide limited detail to the user and are written for lay users of the soil survey. Map unit descriptions included in published Rhode Island soil survey provide more detail to the user concerning use and management of the soils and are also written for lay users of the soil survey. These descriptions provide information on map unit content, contrasting soil inclusions, and general soil management statements. To view the soil map unit descriptions from the published soil survey visit: <http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soillegend.html>. The Rhode Island data located on the Soil Data Mart may be accessed at <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/Survey.aspx?State=RI>. The Rhode Island NRCS soil survey website may be accessed at: <http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soils.html>



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